

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement drawing sheets include changes to Figs. 6 and 7. Reference characters "8" and "R" have been added to Fig. 6. The legend of "Prior Art" has been added to Fig. 7. The cross-hatching on element 'f' in Fig. 7 has been modified in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets 6/7 and 7/7

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant notes that the Information Disclosure Statement submitted on March 13, 2007 has not been acknowledged in the outstanding Office Action. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner confirm consideration of the documents cited therein by returning a signed copy of Form PTO-1449 with the next official communication.

The specification and the drawings have been amended to address the alleged informalities noted by the Examiner.

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Rabson (Australian Specification Publication No. 234,387). Claims 1-4 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Castellon (U.S. Patent No. 6,557,433).

Without acceding to the outstanding rejections, Claims 1-4 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of newly presented Claims 5-15, of which Claims 5 and 10 are independent.

As set forth in independent Claim 5, Applicant's invention provides, inter alia, a respective cylindrical member disposed in at least one first set of accommodating

portions. The cylindrical member has an axis that extends along an axial direction of the telescopic shaft and gradually decreases in outer diameter from a central portion toward each of the cylindrical member's end portions along the axial direction. The first set of accommodating portions is formed by a first pair of axially extending grooves. The first pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on an outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and on an inner peripheral surface of said female shaft.

Claim 5 also provides a respective rolling member disposed in at least one second set of accommodating portions. The second set of accommodating portions is formed by a second pair of axially extending grooves. The second pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and on the inner peripheral surface of said female shaft. Each rolling member is radially biased.

Independent Claim 10 provides, inter alia, a respective cylindrical member disposed in at least one first set of accommodating portions. The cylindrical member has an axis that extends along an axial direction of the telescopic shaft and has frustoconical portions decreasing in outer diameter from a central portion of the cylindrical member

toward each of the cylindrical member's end portions, respectively, along the axial direction. The first set of accommodating portions is formed by a first pair of axially extending grooves. The first pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on an outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and on an inner peripheral surface of said female shaft.

Claim 10 also provides a respective rolling member disposed in at least one second set of accommodating portions. The second set of accommodating portions is formed by a second pair of axially extending grooves. The second pair of axially extending grooves is formed respectively on the outer peripheral surface of said male shaft and on the inner peripheral surface of said female shaft. Each rolling member is radially biased.

While the cancellation of Claims 1-4 of course moots the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102, it is also apparent that the cited references fail to teach or reasonably suggest the above aspects of the newly presented claims and, in particular, the claimed arrangement of cylindrical member, rolling member, and accommodating portions.

Accordingly, Claims 5-15 are in condition for allowance, and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10303) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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